

New distributional information of birds from the State of Morelos, Mexico

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The Mexican state of Morelos was one of the first in the country to see formal scientific studies of bird faunas, beginning in earnest in the middle of the nineteenth century. Since then, many publications have detailed the birds of the state, including Martín del Campo (1937), Friedmann *et al.* (1950), Davis & Russell (1953), Arellano & Rojas (1956), Miller *et al.* (1957), Rowley (1962), Navarro *et al.* (1991), Urbina & Robles (1992), and Gaviño (1994, 1995). In spite of such interest, the knowledge of the avifauna of the state remains incomplete; the purpose of this contribution is to describe records of 35 species previously unrecorded from the state.

Howell & Webb (1995) provide, for first time, range maps for all species in Mexico. By the general nature of the work, however, those authors could not specifically refer to the tens of thousands of unpublished records used to generate the range maps. While we have found no specific records for Morelos of the following eight species, for which we have documented reports, the occurrence of these species is not surprising and fits well with the status and distribution indicated by Howell & Webb (1995): Eared Grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*, Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors*, American Wigeon *A. americana*, Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*, Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*, Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan*, Marsh Wren *Cistothorus palustris*, Brewer's Blackbird *Euphagus cyanocephalus*. For a further 27 species (four of them certainly or probably derived from escaped captive birds) of more notable occurrence we herein provide specific details.

Since 1985, I have been carrying out a series of studies of the distribution of the avifauna of Morelos. My studies have focused on 20 localities across the state (Fig. 1, Appendix). Additional information was extracted from the scientific literature cited above, from a recent regional summary (Howell & Webb 1995), and from records from the following scientific collections: Colección Ornitológica, Instituto de Biología, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Mexico City (COIBUNAM), and the Museo de Zoología, Facultad de Ciencias, UNAM, Mexico City (MZFC). Voucher specimens were collected to document as many records as was possible, and are deposited in the Colección Ornitológica, Centro de Investigaciones Biológicas, UAEM (COCIB); photographic documentation is available for examination on request from the author.

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax brasiliianus*

I observed and photographed individuals of this species at Los Carros on 17 March 1992 (2 individuals), 17 May 1992 (2), 6 April 1992 (1), 12 June 1993 (6), and 16 July 1994 (3). On 21 February 1996, R. D. Durtsche examined an individual trapped in fishing nets, also at Los Carros. On the Río Amacuzac, near Atlapa, Guerrero, two

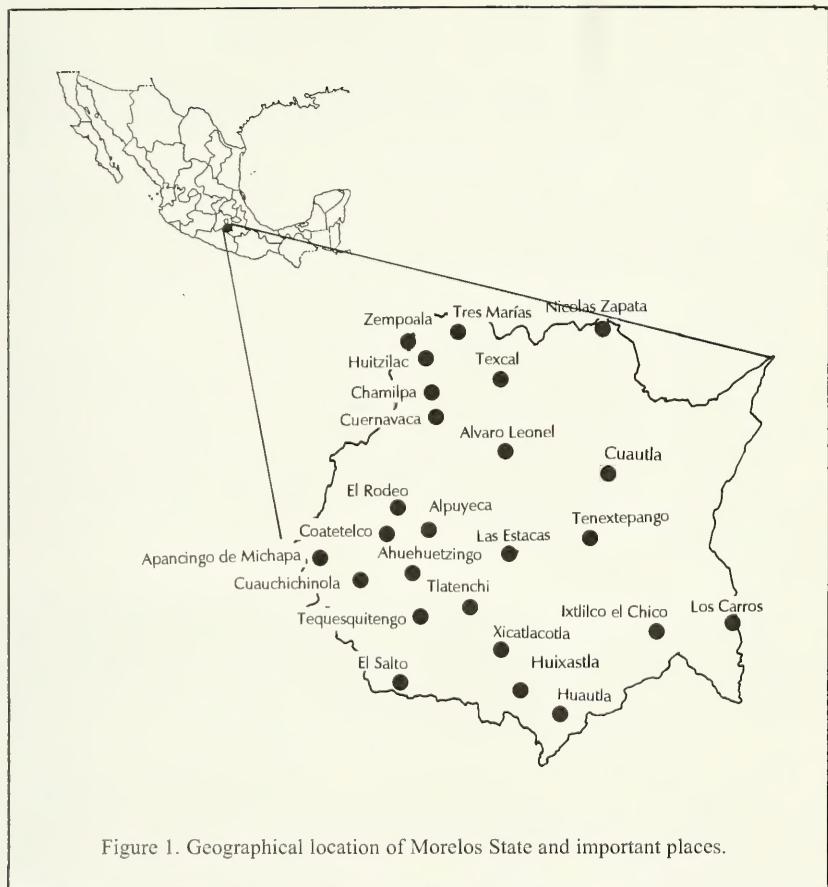


Figure 1. Geographical location of Morelos State and important places.

individuals were observed perched on dry trunks in the middle of the river. Friedmann *et al.* (1950) reported this species' occurrence in interior Mexico in Guerrero, México, and Guanajuato.

BARE-THROATED TIGER-HERON *Tigrisoma mexicanum*

One individual in immature plumage was observed and photo-graphed on a rock along the Río Amacuzac, 20 km SE of Huixastla, on 18 March 1993. The closest record of this species is from coastal Guerrero (Friedmann *et al.* 1950).

WHITE IBIS *Eudocimus albus*

One individual was observed at Coatetelco in a flock of White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi* on 19 November 1994. The closest record of this species is from coastal Guerrero, and it has been recorded in interior Mexico in Guanajuato (Friedmann *et al.* 1950), and Coahuila and Nuevo León (Howell & Webb, 1995).

BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK *Dendrocygna autumnalis*

This species has been observed and photographed in winter and summer in great numbers. Two individuals shot in July 1992 were photographed and examined in detail; one had an odd white band on the chest. Records include 3 on 1 January 1987 at El Rodeo, Miacatlán; 2 on 2 July 1992 at 3 km SW Alpuyeca, Miacatlán; 13 on 26 July and 2 on 3 August 1994 at Apancingo de Michapa, Coatlán del Río; and 1 on 23 January 1996 at Coatetelco, Miacatlán. The closest record of this species is that of AOU (1983), who reported this species as resident in the Valley of Mexico; Wilson & Ceballos-Lascuráin (1993), however, correctly pointed out that the species, although recorded there, is a rare vagrant.

MALLARD *Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos*

One adult male was observed and photographed in Cuernavaca in December 1992. This bird was believed to be wild, but the possibility of it being an escapee cannot be excluded. Arellano & Rojas (1956) reported this species from the Valle de México, and Leopold (1977) mentioned that their migrations reached at least central Mexico; Saunders & Saunders (1981, in Howell & Webb 1995) report that this species formerly occurred regularly to central Mexico.

OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*

This species has been observed at several reservoirs around the state: Tlayca (December 1995), Ixtlilco el Chico (December 1995), and El Rodeo (9 December 1989). At Los Carros, it was observed monthly from March 1991 through February 1993, and eight individuals were recorded along about 55 km of the Río Amacuzac between Huixastla and Atenango del Río, Guerrero from 17 to 19 March 1993. In July 22–26, an immature individual was observed at Huautla. One immature female and an adult male were recorded at Coatetelco, 11 October 1996. Two individuals killed in fishing nets have been inspected, from one of which a feather was saved. Friedmann *et al.* (1950) presented records of this species from Guerrero, Distrito Federal, and México.

WHITE-TAILED KITE *Elanus leucurus*

A pair of this species was filmed on video by H. Mejía-Mojica on a dry trunk in the middle of agricultural fields at Los Carros (11 December 1992). It has also been recorded there in November 1991 (1 individual), January 1993 (1), December 1993 (2), 7 July 1995 (4), and on 30 August 1996, when one individual was observed eating a lizard. This species has extended its range in the region dramatically since 1960 (Eisenmann 1971). The closest record is from the Distrito Federal (Wilson & Ceballos-Lascuráin 1993).

HARRIS' HAWK *Parabuteo unicinctus*

This species has been observed and photographed on several occasions, usually perched on dry trunks in grassy areas, as follows: Alpuyeca, 23 March 1989 and 3 October 1987 (single individuals); Cuachichinola, 23 January 1990 (1), Los Carros,

17 October 1991 (1), 13 November 1991 (2), 9–10 December 1991 (1), 17 February 1992 (3), 17 March 1992 (3), 10 April 1992 (1), 21 January 1993 (1), and 27 February 1993 (1), Ahuehuetzingo, single individuals on 23 March 1989, 3 October 1987, 25 April 1993, and 3 August 1994. Closest records of this species are from Puebla and Distrito Federal (Macouzet 1993).

BLACK-COLLARED HAWK *Busarellus nigricollis*

One individual was observed perched on a dead trunk and also in flight on the Río Chalma near Cuachichinola on 19 November 1985. At a range of c. 10 m, the white head and black breast mark were clearly seen, as were the black border to the wings in flight. The area where it was seen has a small stream and small pools used by cattle. Macouzet (1993) mentioned two records from the state, but did not give specific localities; otherwise, the closest localities known for this species are in Guerrero (Friedmann *et al.* 1950).

RED-SHOULDERED HAWK *Buteo lineatus*

An immature female was collected on 18 January 1988 in riparian forest at Tlatenchi (COCIB 1571). An adult was observed in riparian vegetation at Coatetelco, 11 October 1996. Nearest known records are from the Distrito Federal (Friedmann *et al.* 1950).

BROAD-WINGED HAWK *Buteo platypterus*

A female banded on 5 December 1970 in Florida was recovered on 2 October 1974 in Morelos (Bird Banding Laboratory, U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, pers. comm.). Nearest known records are from the Distrito Federal (Wilson & Ceballos-Lascuráin 1993).

ZONE-TAILED HAWK *Buteo albonotatus*

One individual was observed at Los Carros on 27 February 1993 and on 22 January 1994, in the latter case flying among a group of Turkey Vultures *Cathartes aura*; another single individual was observed and photographed at El Salto on 14 August 1996. Although other observations of this species for the state were reported by Cruz (1983) and Gaviño (1995), the above records appear to be the first winter records for the state.

GREAT BLACK-HAWK *Buteogallus urubitinga*

This species has been observed regularly at Los Carros, perching in trees at the edge of the forest or soaring on thermal air currents; on a few occasions, it has been observed fishing at the water's edge. In 1992, it was observed and photographed on 10 April (2 adults and 1 immature), 6 May (1 adult), 15 July (2 adults), 5 August (1 adult), 9 September (1 adult), 19 October (1 adult), and 11 December (1 adult). Macouzet (1993) reported records of the species in the state, but did not provide any details; otherwise, the nearest records are from the coast of Guerrero, where it is a permanent resident (Howell & Webb, 1995).

LAUGHING FALCON *Herpetotheres cachinnans*

One individual was observed perched on a “cazahuate” (*Ipomoea* sp.), at Xicatlacotla on 8 February 1991; calls of this species were recorded at Huautla on 23 July 1996. Friedmann *et al.* (1950) reported this species for the states of Guerrero and Puebla.

APLOMADO FALCON *Falco femoralis*

I observed one individual perched on a powerline post in Colonia Alvaro Leonel, close to Cañón de Lobos, in March 1988. It was seen at close range and its moustache stripe was clearly seen. Closest records are those of permanent residents from the coast of Guerrero in the border with Oaxaca (Howell & Webb, 1995).

SNOWY PLOVER *Charadrius alexandrinus*

I collected an adult male (COCIB 1468) of this species at Coatetelco on 28 November 1987, which was associated with five other individuals. Although Howell & Webb (1994, 1995) indicate that this species is found in central Mexico, it apparently has not been recorded previously from Morelos.

NORTHERN JACANA *Jacana spinosa*

H. Mejia-Mojica and B. Stewart (pers. comm.) observed one adult individual at Las Estacas on 26 December 1986. Another record, from Cocoyoc, was reported by Márquez (1986). Otherwise, the closest record is from the Distrito Federal (Wilson & Ceballos-Lascuráin 1993).

BLACK-NECKED STILT *Himantopus mexicanus*

H. Mejia-Mojica collected an individual at Apancingo de Michapa on 17 April 1988 (COCIB 1590). Additional individuals have been observed and photographed at El Rodeo on 4 January 1987 and 17 January 1993 (group of 20); Coatetelco on 5 May 1987, 28 November 1987, and 17 October 1994; and Los Carros on 11 December 1992. Although Howell & Webb (1995) indicated a broad distribution for this species in central Mexico, Friedmann *et al.* (1950) reported it for Mexico and Puebla only; Wilson & Ceballos-Lascuráin (1993) reported it for the Distrito Federal.

AMERICAN AVOCET *Recurvirostra americana*

Individuals of this species were observed and photographed at Coatetelco on 15 and 28 November 1988, and on 17 October 1994, as well as at Apancingo de Michapa on 3 August 1994 (11 individuals). Howell & Webb (1995) indicated a broad distribution for this species as a resident in central Mexico, and Wilson & Ceballos-Lascuráin (1993) reported it for the Distrito Federal.

WILLET *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*

H. Mejia-Mojica observed an individual of this species at Los Carros on 9 April 1996 (pers. comm.). The nearest record of this species is from the Distrito Federal (Wilson & Ceballos-Lascuráin 1993).

LEAST TERN *Sterna antillarum*

I photographed an adult of this species perched on a rock in the middle of the reservoir at Apancingo de Michapa on 3 April 1992. The nearest known record for this species is from the coast of Guerrero (Howell & Webb 1995).

WHITE-FRONTED PARROT *Amazona albifrons*

This species has been observed and photographed in Cuernavaca in January and April 1990, 28 June 1992, and January, March (pairing), October and November 1993. These individuals presumably represent escapees from captivity.

RED-LORED PARROT *Amazona autumnalis*

This species is a common resident in the riparian forest in the barrancas and large gardens around Cuernavaca. As in the previous species, this has presumably become established in the area after release or escape of captive individuals. Groups were frequently observed in the Colonias Palmira and Acapantzingo, in groups of 2-8 moving south to north in the early morning. A pair attempted to nest in a dead palm in March, but the nest was destroyed by a Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*.

GREAT SWALLOW-TAILED SWIFT *Panyptila sanctihieronymi*

Two individuals were observed flying near the dam of Cruz Pintada, Huautla, on 23 July 1996; six additional individuals were recorded at the same locality on 24 July. On 7 December 1996, more than ten individuals were observed near the cliffs in Tepozteco, Tepoztlán, as they produced parrot-like calls while flying. The distribution of this swift includes the Pacific coast north to the Morelos-Guerrero border (Howell & Webb 1995).

EUROPEAN STARLING *Sturnus vulgaris*

Three individuals in breeding plumage were observed at Las Estacas on 10 April 1997. They were feeding in grass and over a *Eucalyptus* tree; one of them was carrying nest material. The nearest record of this non-native species is from México City (Wilson & Ceballos-Lascuráin 1993).

NORTHERN CARDINAL *Cardinalis cardinalis*

One individual of this species was observed and photographed on 8 March 1984 and in March 1990; Cruz (1983) also noted this species the northern portion of the state. Wilson & Ceballos-Lascuráin (1993) mentioned March records of this species in the Distrito Federal, and we agree with them that records in central interior Mexico represent escapes of pets.

Discussion

Examination of the distributional maps presented by Howell & Webb (1995) indicated that, for nine of the species recorded herein, my records represent substantial range extensions: *Phalacrocorax brasiliensis*, *Tigrisoma mexicanum*, *Eudocimus albus*, *Elanus leucurus*, *Busarellus nigricollis*, *Buteogallus urubitinga*, *Herpetotheres*

cachinnans. The remaining species do not represent great range extensions, based on the maps in Howell & Webb (1995), but the lack of specific, published prior records from Morelos makes their reporting worthwhile.

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Appendix

Localities for field work from which new records were assembled.

Locality	Municipality	Coordinates	Elevation	Habitat
Atlapa	Atenango del Rio	10°14' N, 99°3' W	750 m	Riparian forest, agriculture
Ahuachuatingo	Puente de Ixtla	18°41' N, 99°17' W	1,000 m	Grasslands, agriculture
El Salto	Puente de Ixtla	18°27' N, 99°17' W	1,710 m	Oak deciduous forest
Alpuyeca	Xochitepec	18°44'18.5" N, 99°15'38.9" W	1,000 m	Grasslands, agriculture, deciduous tropical scrub, riparian forest
Alvaro Leonel	Yautepéc	18°54' N, 99°9' W	1,500 m	Grasslands
Apancingo de Michapa	Coatlán del Rio	18°41' N, 99°27' W	1,100 m	Grasslands, pond
Cuernavaca	Cuernavaca	18°56' N, 99°14' W	1,500 m	Riparian forest, pond
El Rodeo	Miacatlán	18°46' N, 99°19' W	1,100 m	Grasslands, pond
Coatetelco	Miacatlán	18°44' N, 99°20' W	1,000 m	Riparian forest, pond with aquatic plants (swamp vegetation)
Chuachichinola	Mazatlpec	18°69' N, 99°22' W	1,100 m	Grasslands, agriculture
Chuautepetl	Huitzilac	19°28' N, 99°18' W	3,190 m	Pine-oak forest
Huitzilac	Huitzilac	19°24' N, 99°17' W	2,800 m	Pine-oak forest
El Capulín	Huitzilac	19°05' N, 99°13' W	3,100 m	Pine-oak forest
Zempoala	Huitzilac	19°03.9' N, 99°18.8' W	2,800 m	Pine-oak forest
Tres Cumbres	Huitzilac	19°03' N, 99°17' W	2,800 m	Pine-oak forest
Ixtlito el Chico	Tepalcingo	18°33' N, 98°51' W	1,100 m	Reservoir
Las Estacas	Tlaltizapán	18°12' N, 99°06' W	1,000 m	Riparian forest, spring
Los Carros	Axochiapan	18°36' N, 98°43' W	1,150 m	Reservoir, grasslands and deciduous tropical scrub
Tequesquicengo	Jojutla	18°37' N, 99°16' W	900 m	Pond
Tlatenchi	Jojutla	18°36' N, 99°11' W	900 m	Riparian forest
Tepozteco	Tepoztlán	19°06' N, 99°06.07' W	2,000 m	Pine oak forest
Texcal	Tepoztlán	18°58' N, 99°10' W	1,740 m	Deciduous tropical scrub
Tenextepango	Ayala	18°44' N, 98°12.5' W	1,275 m	Grasslands, agriculture
Huautla	Tlaquiltango	18°26' N, 99°1' W	1,200 m	Deciduous tropical scrub, riparian forest
Rio Amacuzac	Tlaquiltango	18°18' N, 99°13' W	750 m	Riparian forest, river
Xicatlacota	Tlaquiltango	18°31' N, 99°11' W	850 m	Deciduous tropical scrub